

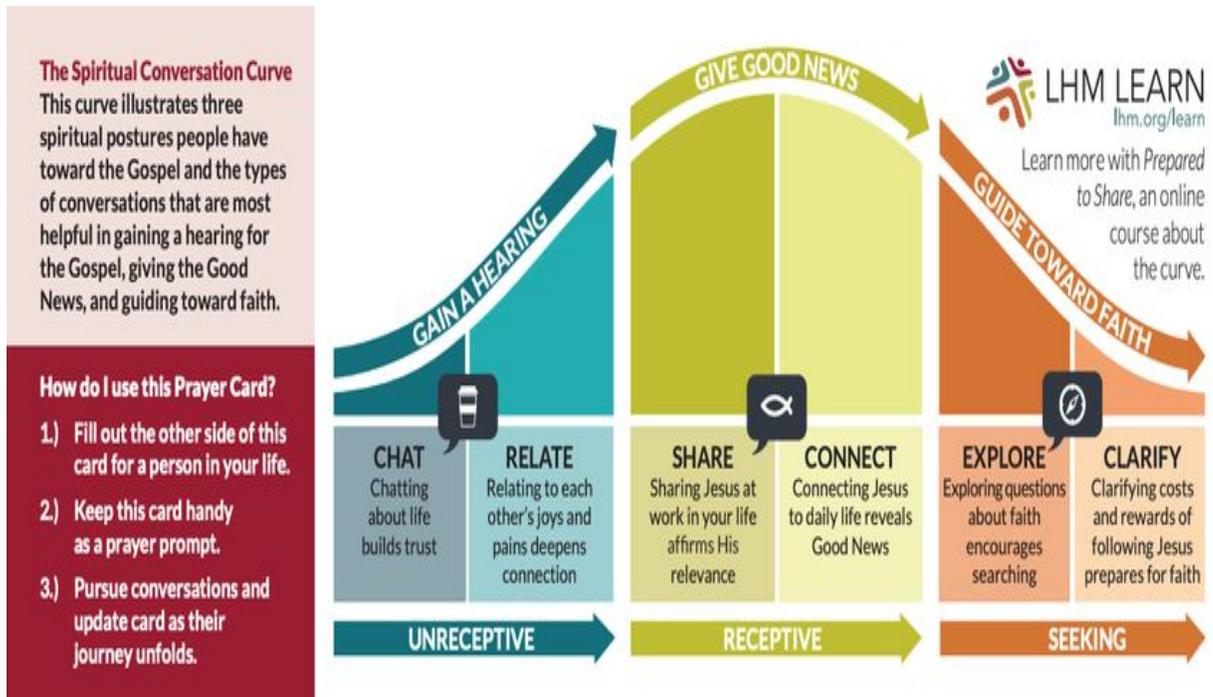
UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY
“The Gospel of John”
Pastor Jim Otte
Spring – Fall, 2019

Lesson 7: John 1:30-34.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son^[a] of God.”

- a. “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin” – John gives a witness regarding Jesus: **The Lamb of God.**
 - a. Recalling the sacrifice of a lamb at the temple, every day, for the sins of the people.
 - b. Recalling the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb at the first Passover in Egypt, where the blood on the door posts directed the angel of death to Passover believers.
 - c. Contrasted with the role of ‘scapegoat,’ who on the Day of Atonement, would symbolically bear the sin of the people, and be driven away into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:9-10).
 - d. Isaiah 53:7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*
- b. “I came baptizing with water...this is he who baptizes” – (baptizein) – to apply water, by dipping, submerging, sprinkling, or pouring.
 - a. John contrasts the baptizing he is doing, to prepare people to receive the “Son of God.”
- c. “And John bore witness...I have seen and born witness” – John did not know who Jesus was, until he saw at the baptism, the presence of the Holy Spirit – in the form of a dove.
 - a. Matthew 3:16-17. *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,^[a] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son,^[b] with whom I am well pleased.”*

d. “bore witness”



- a. Lutheran Hour Ministries' (LHM) new guide on tailoring your “witness” to ‘meeting people where they are.’
- b. Can order card versions of this from LHM.org

John 1:35-51

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?”

- a. “What are you seeking?” – Jesus begins by searching their hearts and asking them to do the same! Jesus accepts you – as a starting point – where you are!
 - a. What are people today seeking in a relationship with Jesus?
 - b. What are people today seeking in a church?
 - i. A place to belong, where I won’t be frowned upon
 - ii. A relationship with God who loves and accepts me
 - iii. Inclusivity, fairness, and justice
 - iv. Spiritual depth; dissatisfaction with easy answers
 - v. People with whom to serve others.
 - c. Many people feel that the church (organized religion) is an impediment to a relationship with Jesus.

b. *LCMS Research Survey Results: “The Search for Young People, 2017”

- a. 1800 LCMS congregations surveyed; 2046 millennial aged participants
- b. Average age 24; twice as many women as men responded
- c. *Nominal* LCMS affiliation: worship less than one time per month
- d. *Active* LCMS affiliation: worship at least one time per month
- e. 377 who had left the LCMS
 - a. #1 reason for leaving the LCMS was feeling unwelcome in the desire to have the hard conversations about faith, life, and culture. Hard topics being dismissed or discounted left the young person feeling judged and isolated.
 - i. “Hard topics” – First Article topics: science & faith; evolution & creation; gender questions; homosexuality (nature/nurture)
 - b. #2 reason for leaving the LCMS (and other mainline protestant denominations: the churches’ “closed minded” stance on social issues: women’s ordination, homosexuality (and other LGBTQ issues), and abortion – on which LCMS’s doctrinal position is not going to change.
 - c. #3 reason: too few young people or little support for them.
 - d. #4 reason: opposition to LCMS doctrinal beliefs: baptism, communion, etc.
 - e. #5 reason: preference for contemporary worship (as opposed to traditional liturgical style)

f. Why millennials stayed *Active* in LCMS:

- a. At least one person or staff member was “safe” to talk to about hard topics
- b. Feeling that the congregation has “my best interests at heart” as opposed to the institution’s best interests.
- c. Feeling “safe” by being listened to and helped to learn spiritual discernment regarding what is real and trustworthy; not mere gatekeepers of knowledge.
- d. Feeling “beloved” even if expressed a struggle or disagreement with LCMS doctrinal positions.
- e. Feeling helped in navigating life’s transitions.

c. What thoughts or comments does this generate for you?

d. What take-aways do you feel are important for our church to consider?